



California Department of Veterans Affairs

NEWS FOR VETERANS

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NEWS FROM THE WHITE HOUSE

NATIONAL FORMER PRISONER OF WAR RECOGNITION DAY, 2005

A Proclamation by the President of the United States of America:

From the time of our Nation's founding, members of our military have built a tradition of honorable and faithful service. As they fought to protect our security and defend our ideals, some endured the extreme hardship of enemy captivity. On National Former Prisoner of War Recognition Day, we remember those courageous individuals taken prisoner while defending our country, and we honor their extraordinary sacrifices.

America's former prisoners of war are among our Nation's bravest heroes. Under the worst conditions, they fought fiercely and served with honor, and they continue to inspire generations with their strength and perseverance. In serving our Nation, each demonstrated personal courage, love of country, and devotion to duty. Because of their sacrifices, and the selflessness and heroism of all who have served in our Armed Forces, millions of people now live in freedom, and America remains the greatest force for good on Earth. On this day, we honor their role in protecting our country and the liberty of mankind.

Today, our brave men and women in uniform carry on their legacy -- unrelenting in battle, unwavering in loyalty, and unmatched in decency. As we pursue victory in the war on terror, I join all Americans in expressing our deepest gratitude to every service member who has been a prisoner of war and to their families.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE W. BUSH, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim April 9, 2005, as National Former Prisoner of War Recognition Day. I call upon the people of the United States to join me in remembering former American prisoners of war by honoring their sacrifices. I also call upon Federal, State, and local government officials and private organizations to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this first day of April, in the year of our Lord two thousand five, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty ninth.

GEORGE W. BUSH

NEWS FROM THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

OPM HELPING TO EXTEND HIRING PREFERENCE TO MORE VETERANS

By Donna Miles
American Forces Press Service

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management is working to make veterans' preference for federal jobs available to more veterans, including a new revised application that allows federal agencies to accept veterans' disability letters.

The revised Application for 10-Point Veteran Preference, Standard Form 15, is being posted directly on OPM's Web site so agencies immediately can accept Veterans Affairs Department letters of disability, officials said. Agencies, OPM examining offices and agency appointing officials use the online application to evaluate claims for veterans' preference on applications for government jobs.

The new revisions to the veterans' preference form bring it in line with VA policy, which generally considers disability letters issued since 1991 as proof of a permanent disability.

To further encourage veterans into the federal system, OPM also is continuing its Veterans' Invitational Program, visiting military bases and medical centers to explain veterans' preference and outline the procedures for applying for federal jobs. Upcoming visits are planned for Cherry Point, N.C.; Camp Lejeune, N.C.; Bolling Air Force Base, Washington, D.C.; Fort Sam Houston and Fort Bliss, Texas; and Fort Lee, Va., officials said.

OPM Acting Director Dan G. Blair, who announced the initiatives earlier this week, said they reflect OPM's "strong emphasis on the rights of veterans, including employment opportunities."

"We must ensure those who are eligible for veterans' preference receive the benefits to which they are entitled," he said.

Veterans of the armed forces have received some degree of hiring preference for federal jobs since the Civil War.

Today's law, reflected in Veterans' Preference Code of 1944, as amended, and in Title 5 of the U.S. Code, ensures that veterans who are disabled or served on active duty in the military during certain specified time frames or campaigns receive preference in hiring from competitive lists of eligible applicants. It also gives these veterans preference in keeping their jobs during reductions in force.

The purpose of veterans' preference, officials explained, is to recognize the economic loss suffered during military service, restore veterans to a favorable competitive position for government jobs, and acknowledge the debt owed to disabled veterans.

More details about veterans' preference are posted on the OPM Web site at <http://www.opm.gov/veterans/html/vetguide.asp>

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